

# Old World News Flashed by Cable to The Times-Dispatch

## WOMEN OF ITALY WILL ASK HEARING

First Skirmish for Suffrage at Coming Session of Parliament.

### SEEK ONLY LIMITED VOTE

Right for the Present to Be Granted to Those Who Have University Degrees.

BY HENRY WOOD.  
(Special Cable to The Times-Dispatch.)  
Rome, February 24.—At the coming session of Parliament, the women of Italy will engage in their first skirmish for suffrage.

The suffrage campaign in Italy has differed greatly from those in other European countries, in that it has been conducted with lack of publicity. It has been exclusively in the hands of the educated women, and since not a line about the struggle has scarcely ever appeared in the public press, the greater part of the female population is not even aware of the movement. The fact, however, that a limited number of women, largely Roman matrons, who are back of the movement, are confident that they will be able to get a hearing this year before Parliament would indicate that they have really done hard and extensive campaign work.

The opportunity for getting the desired bill before Parliament comes from the fact that the principal item of business that will be disposed of this year is an electoral reform bill designed to grant practically universal suffrage to all classes of men in Italy. The women are confident, therefore, that the bill can be amended so that at least a part of their number will be given the right to vote.

However, to effect this favorable opportunity lies the certainty that if the clause for woman's suffrage should prove an obstacle to the passage of the electoral reform bill, it would be another without discussion. Premier Giolitti's elevation to power and the election of a Parliament to him was based largely upon his promise for general suffrage in Italy, and it is not expected that he will permit the efforts of the women to stand in the way of getting his pet measure through Parliament.

The electoral reform bill is now in the hands of a commission, upon the members of which the Roman matrons are bringing influence to secure the insertion of a clause for women. So far they have been asked to reduce their demands to a minimum, but they have been assured that if they do not ask too much the clause may be inserted in the general reform bill.

The woman's committee has therefore decided to ask for the present only that the right of suffrage be granted to women "laureates," or those who have received university degrees. In Italy the men themselves have only secured the right of franchise section by section, and the women feel that their best chance for success is to demand the right in this same manner, in making their preliminary demands, therefore, the women feel that they will disarm the possibility of opposition on the grounds of both intellectual and physical unfitness.

Naturally, even should the commission agree to the clause, it will then be necessary to secure permission from Premier Giolitti, "The Iron Man of Italy," to allow it to be discussed in Parliament. However, all of the women relatives of Giolitti are in accord with the movement, and the committee in charge is depending entirely upon these, through the subtle winning influences which the Italian woman can always bring to bear, to secure for them the desired permission.

Just how much this movement means to some of the women who are fighting so quietly for it, can possibly be judged from the statement by Lady Giacinta Martini Maresca, the founder of the movement in Italy, and who is at its head.

"I have fought so much and suffered so much for this ideal," she declared, "I have bound to this hope so much of my very life, that I would die content if we were able to attain it, even in the most unimpeachable part. But while we would be content now even with the recognition of the right of women to vote, we do not mean that it should apply only to the intellectual class for whom we are first demanding it. I believe that all women who work and think should have this right. But we cannot hope to come to this grand concession all at once, and therefore, we shall be satisfied if, as the men have done, we can approach it by degrees."

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## APPOINTED CENSOR OF BRITISH DRAMA

Charles H. Brookfield, Gifted Young Playwright, Gets Post.

### CRITICISM LEVELED AT HIM

Vigorous Attack on Present System Made by George Bernard Shaw.

BY ED. L. KEEN.  
(Special Cable to The Times-Dispatch.)  
London, February 24.—"Dear Old Charley's" chicken has come home to roost, greatly to the embarrassment of its former owner. As it is a very naughty fowl—for which perhaps it is not altogether to blame, being of French extraction—it threatens to corrupt the whole bannard.

When Charles H. Brookfield, the gifted young playwright, several years ago wrote and adapted to the English stage one of Labiche's most racy farces, he did not dream that one day he would become the censor of the British drama. The play, which Brookfield called "Dear Old Charley," dealt with the intrigues of "Charley," carried on with the wives of the men whom otherwise he treated as his dear friends. It was all very funny, but it was about as raw a performance as was ever seen in London. The critics at the time couldn't figure how it had ever gotten past the authorities.

Now it has been revived, but not by Brookfield. On behalf of the playwrights and actors who lately have suffered from the censorial activities of "Dear Old Charley," as they ironically called him, Charley Hawtrey, one of England's best character actors, thought it would be a good scheme to put on an expurgated version of the farce, just as it was played years ago. Of course, this is not done in any respectful spirit. They merely wanted to see how Brookfield would take it.

The censorship is the latest question to-day before the British public, not even excepting home rule or woman suffrage. It is agreed on all sides that the English stage needs a censorship, and that it needs it badly; but there is almost equal unanimity of opinion that the kind of censorship exercised at present is as unfair as it is inadequate. Control of the theatres is in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain. This post, a political appointment, although responsible only to the crown, was held by Lord Spencer until a few days ago, when he resigned ostensibly because of ill health, but really because of the criticism leveled at him. He and Brookfield were fellow students at Cambridge, and were both members of the Cambridge Dramatic Club.

Critics of the censorship are recalling with some gusto the fact that both appeared in their student days in a notably savory farce, entitled "A Tragedy in Seven Acts." When Lord Spencer was held by Lord Spencer until a few days ago, when he resigned ostensibly because of ill health, but really because of the criticism leveled at him. He and Brookfield were fellow students at Cambridge, and were both members of the Cambridge Dramatic Club.

Notwithstanding the latter-day advance of liberal thought, in politics as well as religion, the censor's policy seems to be dictated by conditions obtaining in the Middle Ages. Recently, the English stage lost what critics believe to have been Israel Zangwill's greatest work, "The Next Religion," merely because the censor disagreed with the unorthodox views expressed by some of the characters in the play, although these are embodied in the characters. Meanwhile, the dances of the most sensuous sort by young women may be seen nightly in the music hall.

Christopher St. John's play, "The Coronation," was refused a license on the ground that it reflected upon the dignity of the kingly office, although an undignified king is considered all too necessary in any comic opera. At the same time, permission was not refused for the production of "The Man

in the Case," at one of the variety theatres.

"Salome" may be danced on the stage without ruffling the censor's sensibilities in the slightest, but he draws the line at the production of Oscar Wilde's play of that name. Although marital infidelity in farce or comic opera is encouraged, the powerful moral of Wilde's "Ghosts" may be learned only in print. Masterpiece's "Monna Vanna" may not be seen by London audiences, but there is no objection to the passionate passages of Wagner's "Ding of the Nibelungen."

It is the inconsistencies of the censorship, as now being practiced, that have caused most of the row. "Oedipus," which was banned for years, recently received a license. Biblical characters may not be introduced by name. When the opera, "Herodias," was produced a short time ago by the Lyric Opera, he had to change the name of John the Baptist to "a prophet." Meantime, Reinhardt, in his wonderful sacred drama, "The Miracle," is permitted to portray the Virgin Mary and the Infant Christ. Laurence Olivier's nativity play, "Bethlehem," is forbidden, but plays with the Devil as the chief character are welcomed. A few years ago "The Mikado" was banned for fear it might offend a visiting Japanese prince. Last December Lawrence Cowe was not allowed to put on a sketch which was one act lifted bodily from a play he wrote four years before, and which was duly licensed at the time.

Among those who most vigorously attacked the present system was George Bernard Shaw, whose criticism provoked Lord Spencer's resignation. "I fully expect," he said, "in a few more years of progress under our Liberal government an enthusiastic reception of dueling, hogging and burning alive in Smithfield, with complete suppression of free speech and the franchise. The Dramatic Club, of London, will then emigrate to Russia in quest of comparative freedom."

## JAPANESE NAVY NOT EQUAL TO THAT OF UNITED STATES

(Special Cable to The Times-Dispatch.)  
Berlin, February 24.—The overwhelming superiority of the American navy over the Japanese is proclaimed by Captain L. Persius, one of the most capable and best known of the retired naval officers writing in the German press, in an article just published in the Berlin Tageblatt.

Captain Persius's views show a complete conversion from those advanced until now by himself, Lieutenant Count von Reventlow and the other German naval publicists, who for several years have been regularly predicting the coming war between the United States and Japan and the inevitable triumph of the Japanese fleet and army.

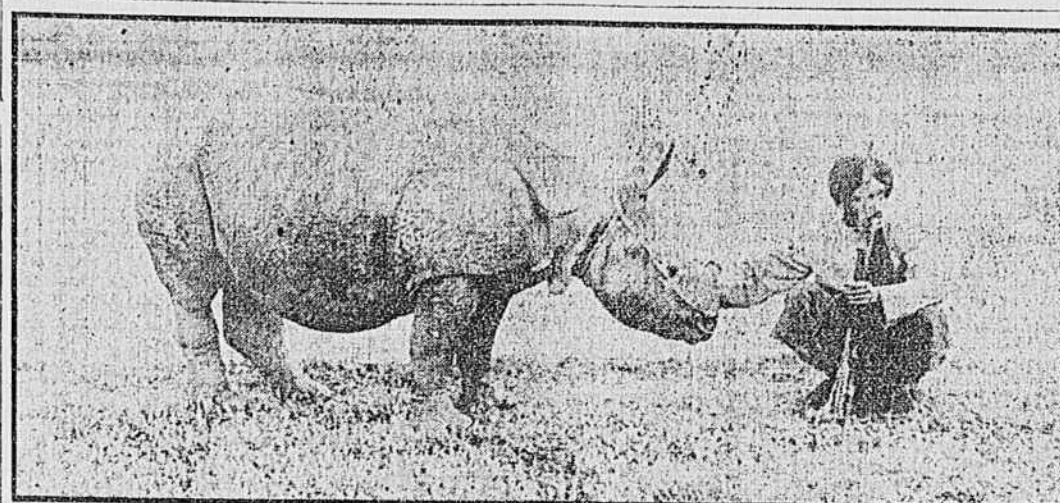
Only the battleships ski and Satsuma, complete with almost record-breaking slowness of construction in five years, can be considered modern ships, though these carry on their twelve-inch guns instead of the usual Dreadnought armament, and it is extremely doubtful whether Japan's first two ships of the Dreadnought class, the Matsushima and Kawachi, will be finished in time to join the fleet this year. A first-class battleship cruiser is under construction in England, another has recently been started in

Japan. These, with small cruisers, destroyers and submarines, represent the total increase since the war with Russia.

The attempt to construct battleships in Japan has proved, according to Captain Persius, a failure, due to the deficiencies of the Japanese steel works and the lack of technically trained workmen in the yards. In confirmation of this is cited the Japanese Minister of Marine, who, in a speech before Parliament, admitted that the foreign-built ships were superior to the Japanese-built ships, and that the government steel works were not up to requirements.

Comparing the Japanese and American fleets, he says that Japan has only thirteen battleships, with a tonnage of 144,000, to oppose thirty-one American battleships of 19,000 tons, including six Dreadnoughts, with six more American Dreadnoughts under construction.

The financial weakness of Japan will, he holds, bar any extensive appropriations for naval purposes for years to come, and the United States need no longer fear for its Pacific possessions.



Baby rhinoceros presented to King George while in India by one of his loyal Indian subjects.

representatives of the republic. The complements of the two new craft, ninety men for each, are 190 in all, are already at Kiel. The Krupp works will arm the destroyers and supply them with other equipment.

Neither politics nor party service have anything to do with the choice of the mayor of the German cities. Greater Berlin, which recently advertised for candidates for the post of director, or mayor, has received applications from thirty men. In the list are state and city officials, educators, merchants and leaders of big industrial enterprises. While it is likely that a Berlin outsider may be chosen for the post, an outsider may be taken from any part of the empire to preside over the destinies of the greater city.

Prince Waldemar, of Prussia, eldest son of Prince Henry, the Emperor's brother, will leave Genoa this month for a six-month trip in the East. The trip is of an entirely personal character. The prince will make stops at Ceylon and Tsingtau, among other places, and may visit Japan, although this is not yet settled. He has studied law at Strasbourg and Kiel, and passed last month his examination as a probationary barrister, entitled to practice law or assist judges without receiving emolument.

The navy of the Argentine Republic will shortly be increased by the addition of two torpedoed destroyers, the finishing touches to which are being touched at the shipbuilding company's yards in Danzig by

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